

INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

(1857 – 1950)

Integral University

Lucknow



Submitted To : Mr. Mohd Siddique Khan

Submitted By : Zainab Nabi Khan

Branch : B.P.T

Year/Sem : 1/2

Group : A

Course : Advanced Communication

Course Code : LN-202

Enrollment No : 2000100618

Email : nzainab@student.iul.ac.in

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Presentation inspiration and motivation have always played a key role in in the success of any venture.

It is my proud and privileged to release the feelings of my gratitude to several people who help me directly or indirectly to conduct this research project work. I express my heart full indebtedness and owe a deep sense of gratitude to my teacher and my faculty guide Dr. Ashfaq Khan, Head of Department of Physiotherapy, Integral University.

I am extremely thankful to Mr. Mohd Siddique Khan for their coordination and cooperation and for their kind gestures of guidance and encouragement throughout the project of this subject Advanced Communication for the topic Indian National Movement (1857-1950).

I also thanks all my friends who have moral is contributed to the preparation of this project report I always be indebted to them.

The study has indicated help me to export more knowledge avenues related to my topic and I'm sure it I will help in my future.

-Zainab Nabi Khan

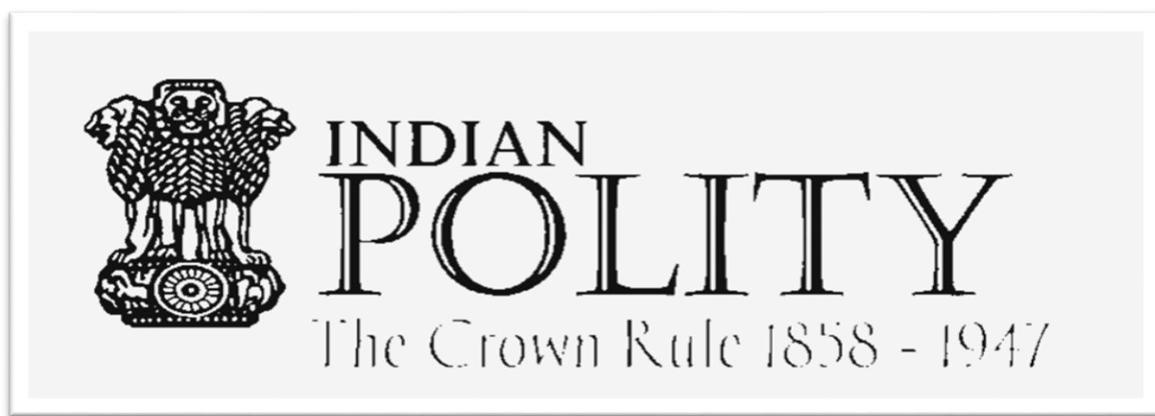
TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. The Emergence of Nationalism.....	06
02. A Nation in Making.....	11
03. Freedom is our birthright.....	14
04. The Growth of Mass Nationalism.....	18
05. The Advent of Mahatama Gandhi.....	21
06. The Rowlatt Satyagraha.....	23
07. Khilafat Agitation and the Non-cooperation Movement.....	25
08. People's Initiative.....	26
09. The People's Mahatama.....	29
10. The Happening of 1922-29.....	31
11. The Simon Commission.....	32
12. To Make The Deaf Hear.....	33
13. The March to Dandi.....	34
14. Women in the Freedom Struggle.....	35

15. Quit India and Later.....	37
16. Bose and Indian National Army.....	38
17. Towards Independence and Partition.....	39

THE EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM

The *Crown Rule* in India led the people to ask a crucial question: What is this country of India and for whom is it meant? The answer that gradually emerged was: India was the people of India – all the people irrespective of class, colour, caste, creed, language, or gender.



And the country, its resources and systems, were meant for all of them. With this answer came the awareness that the British were exercising control over the resources of India and the lives of its people, and until this control was ended India could not be for Indians.

This consciousness began to be clearly stated by the political associations formed after **1850**, especially those that came into being in the **1870s** and **1880s**. Most of these were led by English-educated professionals such as lawyer



The more important ones were the ***Poona Sarvajanik Sabha***, the ***Indian Association***, the ***Madras Mahajan Sabha***, the ***Bombay Presidency Association***, and of course the ***Indian National Congress***.

Though many of these associations functioned in specific parts of the country, their goals were stated as the goals of all the people of India, not those of any one region, community or class. They worked

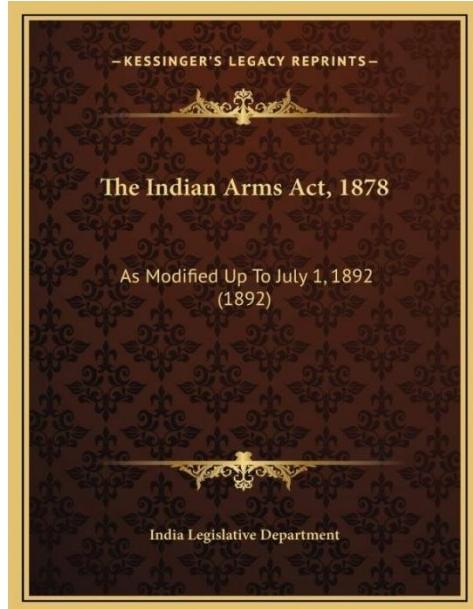
with the idea that the people should be sovereign – a modern consciousness and a key feature of nationalism.

In other words, they believed that the Indian people should be empowered to take decisions regarding their affairs. The dissatisfaction with British rule intensified in the **1870s** and **1880s**.

The **Arms Act** was passed in **1878** under **Lord Layton's** administration, disallowing Indians from possessing arms. In the same year the **Vernacular Press Act** was also enacted in an effort to silence those who were critical of the government. The Act allowed the government to confiscate the assets of newspapers including their printing presses if the newspapers published anything that was found “objectionable”.



LORD LYTTON's
ADMINISTRATION
in INDIA



In **1883**, there was a furore over the attempt by the government to introduce the ***Ilbert Bill***. The bill provided for the trial of British or European persons by Indians, and sought equality between British and Indian judges in the country. But when white opposition forced the government to withdraw the bill, Indians were enraged.

The event highlighted the racial attitudes of the British in India. Sovereign – The capacity to act independently without outside interference emerges the need for an all-India organisation of educated Indians had been felt since **1880**, but the ***Ilbert Bill*** controversy deepened this desire.

The ***Indian National Congress*** was established when 72 delegates from all over the country met at Bombay in **December 1885**. The early leadership – ***Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, W.C. Bonnerji, Surendranath Banerji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, S. Subramania Iyer***, among others – was largely from **Bombay** and **Calcutta**.



Fig; The First Indian National Congress, 1885.

Dadabhai Naoroji, a businessman and publicist settled in London, and for a time member of the **British Parliament**, guided the younger nationalists. A retired British official, **A.O. Hume**, also played a part in bringing Indians from the various regions together.



Fig; Dadabhai Naoroji (Pioneer of Indian Nationalism) and Allen Octavian Hume (Father of Indian National Congress) with Sir William Wedderburn (President of Congress Allahabad Session 1889 & 1910).

A NATION IN MAKING

It has often been said that the Congress in the first twenty years was “moderate” in its objectives and methods. During this period it demanded a greater voice for Indians in the government and in administration.

It wanted the ***Legislative Councils*** to be made more representative, given more power, and introduced in provinces where none existed. It demanded that Indians be placed in high positions in the government. For this purpose it called for ***civil service examinations*** to be held in India as well, not just in ***London***.

The demand for Indianisation of the administration was part of a movement against racism, since most important jobs at the time were monopolised by white officials, and the British generally assumed that Indians could not be given positions of responsibility.

Since British officers were sending a major part of their large salaries home, ***Indianisation***, it was hoped, would also reduce the drain of wealth to England. Other demands included the separation of the

judiciary from the executive, the repeal of the **Arms Act** and the freedom of speech and expression.

The early Congress also raised a number of economic issues. It declared that British rule had led to poverty and famines: increase in the land revenue had impoverished peasants and zamindars, and exports of grains to Europe had created food shortages.

The Congress demanded reduction of revenue, cut in military expenditure, and more funds for irrigation.



INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS GROUP, BOMBAY, DECEMBER 1904.

Front Row. From left to right. Dinsshaw Edulji Wacha (ex-President), Sir William Wedderburn, Bart. (ex-President), Sir Phirozeshah M. Mehta, K.C.I.E. (ex-President), Sir Henry Cotton, K.C.S.I. (President), Samuel Smith, M.P., Surendro Nath Banerjea (ex-President), and J. N. Ghosal.

Second Row. From left to right. F. J. Lalji, H. A. Wadia, N. M. Saker, R. K. Cama, the Hon. G. K. Gokhale, M. Viraraghava Chariar, the Hon. G. K. Parekh, Shamrao Vithal, S. C. Sarbadhikari, and Hasan Budrudin Tyabji.

It passed many resolutions on the ***salt tax, treatment of Indian labourers abroad***, and the ***sufferings of forest dwellers*** – caused by an ***interfering forest administration***. All this shows that despite being a body of the educated elite, the Congress did not talk only on behalf of professional groups, zamindars or industrialists.

The Moderate leaders wanted to develop public awareness about the unjust nature of British rule. They published newspapers, wrote articles, and showed how British rule was leading to the economic ruin of the country.

They criticised British rule in their speeches and sent representatives to different parts of the country to mobilise public opinion. They felt that the British had respect for the ideals of freedom and justice, and so they would accept the just demands of Indians.

What was necessary, therefore, was to express these demands, and make the government aware of the feelings of Indians.

“FREEDOM IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT”

By the **1890s** many Indians began to raise questions about the political style of the Congress. In **Bengal, Maharashtra** and **Punjab**, leaders such as **Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak** and **Lala Lajpat Rai** were beginning to explore more radical objectives and methods.



Fig; Lal, Bal, Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai in middle, Bipin Chandra Pal in left, Bal Gangadhar Tilak in right)

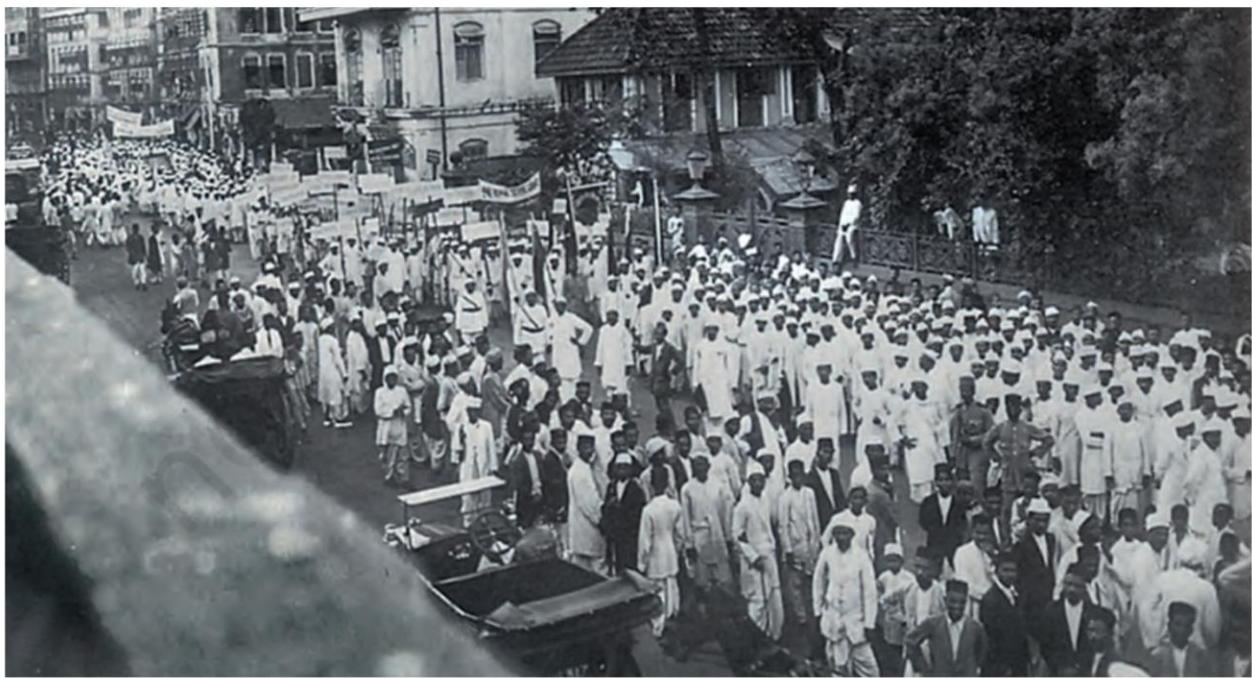
They criticised the Moderates for their “politics of prayers”, and emphasised the importance of self-reliance and constructive work. They argued that people must rely on their own strength, not on the “good” intentions of the government; people must fight for swaraj. Tilak raised the slogan, ***“Freedom is my birthright and I shall have it!”***

In **1905**, **Viceroy Curzon** partitioned Bengal. At that time Bengal was the biggest province of British India and included Bihar and parts of Orissa. The British argued for dividing Bengal for reasons of administrative convenience. But what did “administrative convenience” mean? Whose “convenience” did it represent?

Clearly, it was closely tied to the interests of British officials and businessmen. Even so, instead of removing the non-Bengali areas from the province, the government separated East Bengal and merged it with **Assam**. Perhaps the main British motives were to curtail the influence of Bengali politicians and to split the Bengali people.

The partition of Bengal infuriated people all over India. All sections of the Congress – the Moderates and the Radicals, as they may be called – opposed it. Large public meetings and demonstrations were organised and novel methods of mass protest developed.

The struggle that unfolded came to be known as the ***Swadeshi movement***, strongest in Bengal but with echoes elsewhere too – in deltaic Andhra for instance, it was known as the ***Vandemataram Movement***.



Fig; Swadeshi Movement (Vandemataram) Movement, Bengal

The Swadeshi movement sought to oppose British rule and encourage the ideas of self-help, swadeshi enterprise, national education, and use of Indian languages. To fight for swaraj, the radicals advocated mass mobilisation and boycott of British institutions and goods. Some individuals also began to suggest that

“revolutionary violence” would be necessary to overthrow British rule.

The opening decades of the twentieth century were marked by other developments as well. A group of Muslim landlords and nawabs formed the **All India Muslim League** at **Deccan** in **1906**. The League supported the partition of Bengal. It desired separate electorates for Muslims, a demand conceded by the government in 1909. Some seats in the councils were now reserved for Muslims who would be elected by Muslim voters. This tempted politicians to gather a following by distributing favours to their own religious groups.

Meanwhile, the **Congress** split in **1907**. The Moderates were opposed to the use of boycott. They felt that it involved the use of force. After the split the Congress came to be dominated by the Moderates with Tilak’s followers functioning from outside. The two groups reunited in **December 1915**. Next year the Congress and the Muslim League signed the historic **Lucknow Pact** and decided to work together for representative government in the country.

THE GROWTH OF MASS NATIONALISM

After **1919** the struggle against **British rule** gradually became a mass movement, involving peasants, tribals, students and women in large numbers and occasionally factory workers as well. Certain business groups too began to actively support the Congress in the **1920s**

Why was this so?

The First World War altered the economic and political situation in India.



Fig; Indian Sikh Soldiers during WW-I

World War-I led to a huge rise in the defence expenditure of the Government of India. The government in turn increased taxes on individual incomes and business profits.

Increased military expenditure and the demands for war supplies led to a sharp rise in prices which created great difficulties for the common people.

On the other hand, business groups reaped fabulous profits from the war. The war created a demand for industrial goods (jute bags, cloth, and rails) and caused a decline of imports from other countries into India.

So Indian industries expanded during the war, and Indian business groups began to demand greater opportunities for development.

The war also leads the British to expand their army. Villages were pressurised to supply soldiers for an alien cause. A large number of soldiers were sent to serve abroad. Many returned after the war with an understanding of the ways in which imperialist powers were exploiting the peoples of Asia and Africa and with a desire to oppose colonial rule in India.

Furthermore, in **1917** there was a revolution in **Russia**. News about peasants' and workers' struggles and ideas of socialism circulated widely, inspiring Indian nationalists.



Fig; 1917 Russian Revolution (Bolshevik Revolution)

THE ADVENT OF MAHATAMA GANDHI

It is in these circumstances that **Mahatma Gandhi** emerged as a mass leader. As you may know, Gandhiji, aged 46, arrived in India in **1915** from **South Africa**.

Having led Indians in that country in non-violent marches against racist restrictions, he was already a respected leader, known internationally.

His South African campaigns had brought him in contact with various types of Indians: Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians; Gujaratis, Tamils and North Indians; and Upper-class merchants, lawyers and workers

Mahatma Gandhi spent his first year in India travelling throughout the country, understanding the people, their needs and the overall situation.

His earliest interventions were in local movements in **Champaran**, **Kheda** and **Ahmedabad** where he came into contact with **Rajendra Prasad** and **Vallabhbhai Patel**.

In Ahmedabad he led a successful **millworkers' strike** in **1918**.



Fig; Founders of the Natal Congress, Durban, South Africa, 1895

In 1895, along with other Indians, Mahatma Gandhi established the Natal Congress to fight against racial discrimination. Mahatama Gandhi, standing at the centre in the row at the back, wearing a coat and tie.

THE ROWLATT SATYAGRAH

In **1919**, Gandhiji gave a call for a Satyagraha against the **Rowlatt Act** that the British had just passed. The Act curbed fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression and strengthened police powers.

Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and others felt that the government had no right to restrict people's basic freedoms. They criticised the Act as "devilish" and tyrannical.

Gandhiji asked the Indian people to observe **6 April 1919** as a day of non-violent opposition to this Act, as a day of "humiliation and prayer" and hartal (strike). **Satyagraha Sabhas** were set up to launch the movement.

The Rowlatt Satyagraha turned out to be the first all-India struggle against the British government although it was largely restricted to cities.

In **April 1919** there were a number of demonstrations and hartals in the country and the government used brutal measures to suppress them. The **Jallianwala Bagh** atrocities, inflicted by **General Dyer** in **Amritsar** on **Baisakhi day (13 April)**, were a part of this repression.

On learning about the massacre, **Rabindranath Tagore** expressed the pain and anger of the country by renouncing his ***knighthood***.

Knighthood is an honour granted by the ***British Crown*** for exceptional personal achievement or public service.

During the ***Rowlatt Satyagraha*** the participants tried to ensure that Hindus and Muslims were united in the fight against British rule. This was also the call of Mahatma Gandhi who always saw India as a land of all the people who lived in the country – Hindus, Muslims and those of other religions.

He was keen that Hindus and Muslims support each other in any just cause.



Fig; The walled compound in which General Dyer opened fire on a gathering of people The people are pointing to the bullet marks on the wall.

KHILAFAT AGITATION AND THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

In **1920** the British imposed a harsh treaty on the **Turkish Sultan** or **Khalifa**. People were furious about this as they had been about the **Jallianwala massacre**.

Also, Indian Muslims were keen that the **Khalifa** be allowed to retain control over Muslim sacred places in the erstwhile **Ottoman Empire**.

The leaders of the Khilafat agitation, **Mohammad Ali** and **Shaukat Ali**, now wished to initiate a full-fledged Non-Cooperation Movement. Gandhiji supported their call and urged the Congress to campaign against "**Punjab wrongs**" (Jallianwala massacre), the Khilafat wrong and demand swaraj.

The **Non-Cooperation Movement** gained momentum through **1921-22**. Thousands of students left government-controlled schools and colleges. Many lawyers such as **Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari** and **Asaf Ali** gave up their practices. British titles were surrendered and legislatures boycotted. People lit public bonfires of foreign cloth. The imports of foreign cloth fell drastically between **1920** and **1922**. But all this was merely the tip of the iceberg. Large parts of the country were on the brink of a formidable revolt.

PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE

In many cases people resisted British rule non-violently. In others, different classes and groups, interpreting Gandhiji's call in their own manner, protested in ways that were not in accordance with his ideas.

In either case, people linked their movements to local grievances. Let us look at a few examples.

- ❖ In ***Kheda, Gujarat***, Patidar peasants organised nonviolent campaigns against the high land revenue demand of the British.
- ❖ In coastal ***Andhra*** and interior ***Tamil Nadu***, liquor shops were picketed.
- ❖ In the ***Guntur*** district of ***Andhra Pradesh***, tribals and poor peasants staged a number of "***forest satyagrahas***", sometimes sending their cattle into forests without paying grazing fee. They were protesting because the colonial state had restricted their use of forest resources in various ways.

- ❖ In **Sind** (now in **Pakistan**), Muslim traders and peasants were very enthusiastic about the Khilafat call.
- ❖ In **Bengal** too, the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation alliance gave enormous communal unity and strength to the national movement.
- ❖ In **Punjab**, the **Akali agitation** of the Sikhs sought to remove corrupt mahants – supported by the British – from their gurdwaras. This movement got closely identified with the Non-Cooperation Movement.



Fig; Shiromani Akali Dal, since 1920

❖ In **Assam**, tea garden labourers, shouting “Gandhi Maharaj ki Jai”, demanded a big increase in their wages. They left the British-owned plantations amidst declarations that they were following Gandhiji’s wish. Interestingly, in the **Assamese** Vaishnava songs of the period the reference to **Krishna** was substituted by “**Gandhi Raja**”.

THE PEOPLE'S MAHATAMA

We can see from the above that sometimes people thought of Gandhiji as a kind of messiah, as someone who could help them overcomes their misery and poverty. Gandhiji wished to build class unity, not class conflict, yet peasants could imagine that he would help them in their fight against zamindars, and agricultural labourers believed he would provide them land.



Fig; In popular images Mahatma Gandhi is often shown as a divine being occupying a place within the pantheon of Indian gods. In this image he is driving Krishna's chariot, guiding other nationalist leaders in the battle against the British.

For instance, at the end of a powerful movement, peasants of ***Pratapgarh*** in the ***United Provinces*** (now Uttar Pradesh) managed to stop illegal eviction of tenants; but they felt it was Gandhiji who had won this demand for them. At other times, using Gandhiji's name, tribals and peasants undertook actions that did not conform to Gandhian ideals.

THE HAPPENINGS OF 1922-29

Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, was against violent movements. He abruptly called off the Non-Cooperation Movement when in

February 1922 a crowd of peasants set fire to a police station in **Chauri Chaura**. Twenty two policemen were killed on that day. The peasants were provoked because the police had fired on their peaceful demonstration.

Once the Non-Cooperation movement was over, Gandhiji's followers stressed that the Congress must undertake constructive work in the rural areas. Other leaders such as **Chitta Ranjan Das** and **Motilal Nehru** argued that the party should fight elections to the councils and enter them in order to influence government policies.

Through sincere social work in villages in the mid-1920s, the Gandhians were able to extend their support base. This proved to be very useful in launching the **Civil Disobedience Movement** in **1930**.

Two important developments of the mid-1920s were the formation of the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**, a Hindu organisation, and the **Communist Party of India**. These parties have held very different ideas about the kind of country India should be.

The revolutionary nationalist **Bhagat Singh** too was active in this period.

THE SIMON COMMISSION

In **1927**, the British government in England decided to send a commission headed by **Lord Simon** to decide India's political future.

The Commission had no Indian representative. The decision created an outrage in India. All political groups decided to boycott the Commission. When the Commission arrived it was met with demonstrations with banners saying "**Simon Go Back**".



Fig; Demonstrators oppose the Simon Commission

- The decade also closed with the Congress resolving to fight for **Purna Swaraj** (complete independence) in **1929** under the presidentship of **Jawaharlal Motilal Nehru**. Consequently, "Independence Day" was observed on **26 January 1930** all over the country.

TO MAKE THE DEAF HEAR

Revolutionary nationalists such as **Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ashfaqullah Khan, Sukhdev, Ram Prasad Bismil** and others wanted to fight against the colonial rule and the rich exploiting classes through a revolution of workers and peasants.

For this purpose they founded the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)** in **1928** at **Ferozeshah Kotla**, Delhi.

On **17 December, 1928**, Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru assassinated **Saunders**, a police officer who was involved in the lathi-charge that had caused the death of **Lala Lajpat Rai**.

On **8 April, 1929**, Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw a bomb in the **Central Legislative Assembly**. The aim, as their leaflet explained, was not to kill but “**to make the deaf hear**”, and to remind the foreign government of its callous exploitation.

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were executed on **March 23, 1931**. Bhagat Singh’s age at that time was only 23.

THE MARCH TO DANDI

Purna Swaraj would never come on its own. It had to be fought for. In **1930**, Gandhiji declared that he would lead a march to break the salt law.

According to this law, the state had a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of salt. Mahatma Gandhi along with other nationalists reasoned that it was sinful to tax salt since it is such an essential item of our food.

The **Salt March** related the general desire of freedom to a specific grievance shared by everybody, and thus did not divide the rich and the poor.

Gandhiji and his followers marched for over 240 miles from **Sabarmati** to the coastal town of **Dandi** where they broke the government law by gathering natural salt found on the seashore, and boiling sea water to produce salt.



Fig; Mahatma Gandhi breaking the salt law by picking up a lump of natural salt, Dandi, 6 April 1930.

WOMEN IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Women from diverse backgrounds participated in the national movement. Young and old, single and married, they came from rural and urban areas, from both conservative and liberal homes.

Their involvement was significant for the freedom struggle, for the women's movement, and for themselves personally. Both British officials and Indian nationalists felt that women's participation gave the national struggle an immense force.

Participation in the freedom movement brought women out of their homes. It gave them a place in the professions, in the governance of India, and it could pave the way for equality with men.

What such participation meant for women is best recounted by them.

Ambabai of **Karnataka** had been married at age twelve. Widowed at sixteen, she picketed foreign cloth and liquor shops in **Udupi**. She was arrested, served a sentence and was rearrested. Between prison terms she made speeches, taught spinning, and organised **prabhat pheris**.

Ambabai regarded these as the happiest days of her life because they gave it a new purpose and commitment. Women, however, had to fight for their right to participate in the movement.

During the Salt Satyagraha, for instance, even Mahatma Gandhi was initially opposed to women's participation. **Sarojini Naidu** had to persuade him to allow women to join the movement.



Fig; Sarojini Naidu with Mahatama Gandhi, Paris, 1931

QUIT INDIA AND LATER

Mahatma Gandhi decided to initiate a new phase of movement against the British in the middle of the Second World War.

The British must quit India immediately, he told them. To the people he said, "***do or die***" in your effort to fight the British – but you must fight non-violently.

Gandhiji and other leaders were jailed at once but the movement spread. It specially attracted peasants and the youth who gave up their studies to join it. Communications and symbols of state authority were attacked all over the country.

In many areas the people set up their own governments. The first response of the British was severe repression. By the end of **1943** over 90,000 people were arrested, and around 1,000 killed in police firing. In many areas orders were given to machine-gun crowds from airplanes. The rebellion, however, ultimately brought the Raj to its knees.



Fig; Quit India movement, August 1942.
Demonstrators clashed with police.

BOSE AND INIDAN NATIONAL ARMY

A radical nationalist, with socialist leanings, *Subhas Chandra Bose* did not share Gandhiji's ideal of ahimsa, though he respected him as the "Father of the Nation".

In **January 1941**, he secretly left his Calcutta home, went to Singapore, via Germany, and raised the ***Azad Hind Fauj*** or the ***Indian National Army (INA)***. To free India from British control, in **1944**, the INA tried to enter India through ***Imphal*** and ***Kohima*** but the campaign failed.



Fig; Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose with Indian National Army

The INA members were imprisoned and tried. People across the country, from all walks of life, participated in the movement against the INA trials.

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE AND PARTITION

Meanwhile, in **1940** the *Muslim League* had moved a resolution demanding “Independent States” for Muslims in the north-western and eastern areas of the country.

The resolution did not mention partition or Pakistan.

- Why did the League ask for an autonomous arrangement for the Muslims of the subcontinent?

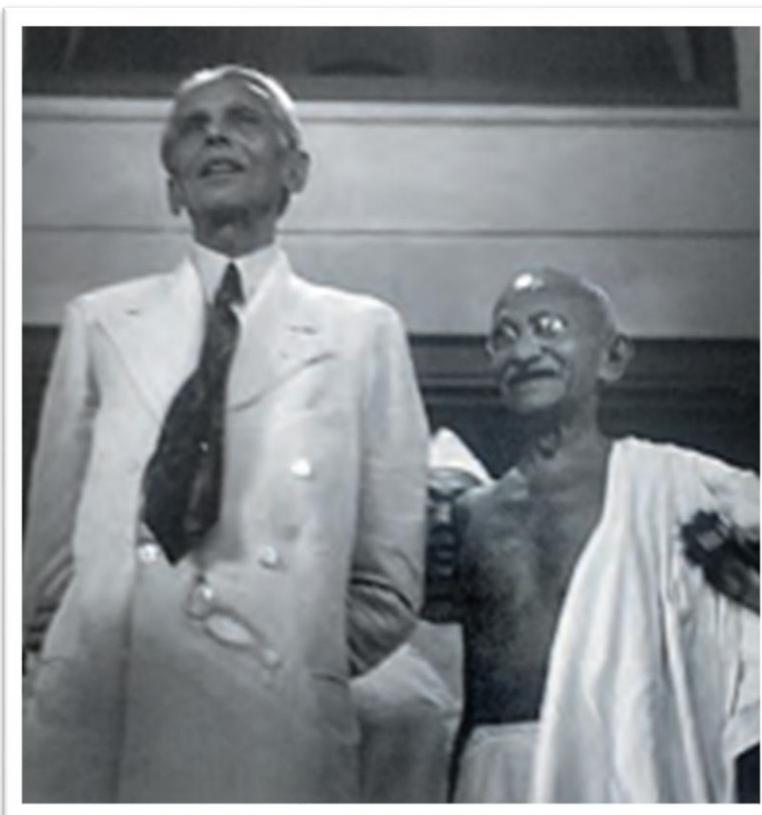
From the late **1930s**, the League began viewing the Muslims as a separate “nation” from the Hindus. In developing this notion it may have been influenced by the history of tension between some Hindu and Muslim groups in the **1920s** and **1930s**.

More importantly, the provincial elections of **1937** seemed to have convinced the League that Muslims were a minority, and they would always have to play second fiddle in any democratic structure.

It feared that Muslims may even go unrepresented. The Congress’s rejection of the League’s desire to form a joint Congress League government in the *United Provinces* in **1937** also annoyed the League.

The Congress's failure to mobilise the Muslim masses in the **1930s** allowed the League to widen its social support. It sought to enlarge its support in the early 1940s when most Congress leaders were in jail.

At the end of the war in **1945**, the British opened negotiations between the Congress, the League and themselves for the independence of India. The talks failed because the League saw itself as the sole spokesperson of India's Muslims. The Congress could not accept this claim since a large number of Muslims still supported it.



Fig; Mohammad Ali Jinnah with Mahatma Gandhi, Bombay, September 1944 An ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity until 1920, Jinnah played an important role in the making of the Lucknow Pact. He reorganised the Muslim League after 1934, and became the major spokesperson for the demand for Pakistan.

Elections to the provinces were again held in 1946. The Congress did well in the “General” constituencies but the League’s success in the seats reserved for Muslims was spectacular. It persisted with its demand for “Pakistan”.

In **March 1946** the British cabinet sent a three-member mission to Delhi to examine this demand and to suggest a suitable political framework for a free India. This mission suggested that India should remain united and constitute itself as a loose confederation with some autonomy for Muslim-majority areas. But it could not get the Congress and the Muslim League to agree to specific details of the proposal. Partition now became more or less inevitable.

After the failure of the **Cabinet Mission**, the Muslim League decided on mass agitation for winning its Pakistan demand. It announced **16 August 1946** as “**Direct Action Day**”.

On this day riots broke out in Calcutta, lasting several days and resulting in the death of thousands of people. By **March 1947** violence spread to different parts of northern India.

Many hundred thousand people were killed and numerous women had to face untold brutalities during the Partition. Millions of people were forced to flee their homes. Torn asunder from their homelands, they were reduced to being refugees in alien lands.

Partition also meant that India changed, many of its cities changed, and a new country – Pakistan – was born. So, the joy of our country's independence from British rule came mixed with the pain and violence of Partition.



Fig; Refugees from riot-torn Punjab gather in New Delhi, in search of shelter and food.